

THE DISOBEDIENT PROPHET

BIBLE TEXT : I Kings 13:1-34; II Kings 23:15-18.

LESSON 293 Junior Course

MEMORY VERSE: "The Lord our God will we serve, and his voice will we obey" (Joshua 24:24).

BIBLE TEXT in King James Version

1 Kings 13:1-34

¹ And, behold, there came a man of God out of Judah by the word of the LORD unto Bethel: and Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense.

² And he cried against the altar in the word of the LORD, and said, O altar, altar, thus saith the LORD; Behold, a child shall be born unto the house of David, Josiah by name; and upon thee shall he offer the priests of the high places that burn incense upon thee, and men's bones shall be burnt upon thee.

³ And he gave a sign the same day, saying, This *is* the sign which the LORD hath spoken; Behold, the altar shall be rent, and the ashes that *are* upon it shall be poured out.

⁴ And it came to pass, when king Jeroboam heard the saying of the man of God, which had cried against the altar in Bethel, that he put forth his hand from the altar, saying, Lay hold on him. And his hand, which he put forth against him, dried up, so that he could not pull it in again to him.

⁵ The altar also was rent, and the ashes poured out from the altar, according to the sign which the man of God had given by the word of the LORD.

⁶ And the king answered and said unto the man of God, Intreat now the face of the LORD thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again. And the man of God besought the LORD, and the king's hand was restored him again, and became as *it was* before.

⁷ And the king said unto the man of God, Come home with me, and refresh thyself, and I will give thee a reward.

⁸ And the man of God said unto the king, If thou wilt give me half thine house, I will not go in with thee, neither will I eat bread nor drink water in this place:

⁹ For so was it charged me by the word of the LORD, saying, Eat no bread, nor drink water, nor turn again by the same way that thou camest.

¹⁰ So he went another way, and returned not by the way that he came to Bethel.

¹¹ Now there dwelt an old prophet in Bethel; and his sons came and told him all the works that the man of God had done that day in Bethel: the words which he had spoken unto the king, them they told also to their father.

¹² And their father said unto them, What way went he? For his sons had seen what

BIBLE REFERENCES:

NOTES:

Idolatry

We remember the story of Aaron who made a golden calf and proclaimed to the people, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 32:4). This was contrary to the first commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). A golden calf! What a poor substitute for the great God who had been so very good to His people!

Many years later we find another man, King Jeroboam, making two golden calves and announcing to the people: "Behold thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (I Kings 12:28). Another attempt to substitute a golden calf for the great God of Heaven and earth, but another failure!

Down the years people have set up idols and worshiped them instead of worshiping God. Of course, in our civilized land, people do not make golden calves and fall down and pray to them. Yet, there are many other forms of idol-worship. Those who frequent the theatres, dances, ball games, and other places of worldly amusement are worshiping the god of pleasures. God will someday bring into judgment those who do not love and serve Him with all their heart.

The Man of God

One day as King Jeroboam stood by the altar to burn incense unto the calves which he had made, there came a man of God from Judah and foretold the birth of Josiah, which took place 360 years later; he also said that upon that very altar the bones of the wicked priests would someday be burned. As a sign that this should come to pass, the Lord caused the altar to be broken and the ashes poured out.

This prophecy made Jeroboam angry, and he put out his hand and said, "Lay hold on him." Then, as he tried to draw back his hand, he could not, for it was dried up and stiff. "Intreat now the face of the Lord thy God, and pray for me, that my hand may be restored me again," he said.

Jeroboam was in the very act of burning incense to false gods; but now that he needed help, he wanted it from the Lord God. The man of God prayed, and the king's hand was healed. Just so with many people today: any kind of religion is all right so long as things are going smoothly; but when sudden trouble comes, they often call for prayer from the true people of God whose prayers are heard and answered.

Now the king asked the man of God to come home with him and refresh himself. "And," he added, "I will give thee a reward." But the man of God refused to go with the king, for he had had instructions from God to eat no bread, drink no water, and to go home another way. Because the people had turned from the true worship of God was no doubt the reason that this man should not have fellowship with them. In obedience to God's commands, he stated for home by another road from that which he had come.

The Old Prophet

Some boys had been listening to the conversation between Jeroboam and the man of God. They had watched, too, as the

way the man of God went, which came from Judah.

¹³ And he said unto his sons, Saddle me the ass. So they saddled him the ass: and he rode thereon,

¹⁴ And went after the man of God, and found him sitting under an oak: and he said unto him, *Art* thou the man of God that camest from Judah? And he said, I *am*.

¹⁵ Then he said unto him, Come home with me, and eat bread.

¹⁶ And he said, I may not return with thee, nor go in with thee: neither will I eat bread nor drink water with thee in this place:

¹⁷ For it was said to me by the word of the LORD, Thou shalt eat no bread nor drink water there, nor turn again to go by the way that thou camest.

¹⁸ He said unto him, I *am* a prophet also as thou *art*; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. *But* he lied unto him.

¹⁹ So he went back with him, and did eat bread in his house, and drank water.

²⁰ And it came to pass, as they sat at the table, that the word of the LORD came unto the prophet that brought him back:

²¹ And he cried unto the man of God that came from Judah, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Forasmuch as thou hast disobeyed the mouth of the LORD, and hast not kept the commandment which the LORD thy God commanded thee,

²² But camest back, and hast eaten bread and drunk water in the place, of the which *the LORD* did say to thee, Eat no bread, and drink no water; thy carcase shall not come unto the sepulchre of thy fathers.

²³ And it came to pass, after he had eaten bread, and after he had drunk, that he saddled for him the ass, *to wit*, for the prophet whom he had brought back.

²⁴ And when he was gone, a lion met him by the way, and slew him: and his carcase was cast in the way, and the ass stood by it, the lion also stood by the carcase.

²⁵ And, behold, men passed by, and saw the carcase cast in the way, and the lion standing by the carcase: and they came and told *it* in the city where the old prophet dwelt.

²⁶ And when the prophet that brought him back from the way heard *thereof*, he said, *It is* the man of God, who was disobedient unto the word of the LORD: therefore the LORD hath delivered him unto the lion, which hath torn him, and slain him, according to the word of the LORD, which he spake unto him.

²⁷ And he spake to his sons, saying, Saddle me the ass. And they saddled *him*.

²⁸ And he went and found his carcase cast in the way, and the ass and the lion

man of God started for home, and then they hurried off and told their father everything. "What way went he?" asked the father, an old prophet of Bethel. When they told him, he said, "Saddle me the ass." Down the road went the old prophet riding as fast as he could. "Art thou the man of God that camest from Judah?" he asked as he at last overtook the man of God. "I am," was the reply of the man of God who sat resting under an oak tree. "Come home with me, and eat bread," begged the old prophet.

Although possibly weary, thirsty, and hungry, yet still determined to carry out all orders given him by the Lord, the man of God said that he had been told not to eat bread, drink water, nor go back by the way he had come.

Persuaded

Often Satan may not win his first attempt to overthrow a child of God. But he will try again, perhaps using another approach. The old prophet was not easily discouraged. I'll try again, he thought. Instead of simply saying, "The Lord spoke to me," he said: "I am a prophet also as thou art; and an angel spake unto me by the word of the LORD, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water." What a clever lie! How much like the devil to tell a lie in order to win his point.

Caught in a Trap

Had the man of God not stopped under the oak, he would not have been overtaken by the wicked old man. He stopped; he sat down; he listened; he carried on a conversation with an enemy. Then he turned back and went to the house of the old prophet; he ate bread and drank water with him. He was caught in the trap of the enemy!

But the sad story of the man of God does not end there. As the two men sat at the table, the old prophet pronounced the doom upon the man who was sent of God to carry out a duty: Because he was disobedient unto the Lord and had come back and eaten and drunk, he would not reach home alive. As he proceeded on his way toward home, he was met by a lion and slain.

God had given him a duty to perform, and he had done it well. But on his way home he turned aside from his course. After God had given him orders as to what to do and what not to do, why did he listen to the lying prophet who claimed to have received contrary orders?

Snares Along the Way

Since that day Satan has had almost 3000 years of experience in turning the hearts of followers of the Lord away from the straight and narrow path. He is just as clever today as he was in the days of Jeroboam in overtaking people of God; he is just as subtle in persuading them to sit down under an oak tree for a rest. It will pay us well to make sure that we always listen to the still, small voice of the Spirit, and never listen to the call of the world or Satan. A boy or girl may say, "Come, go to the theatre with me." You may reply, "I am a Christian, and do not attend such places." "But," he will argue, "I am a Christian, and I go all the time." However, if your heart is "in tune" with Heaven, something will tell you that a theatre is no place for a real Christian.

The old devil laughs, and mocks the child of God who turns back, just as the old prophet mocked the man of God. What a disaster overtook him who was once led of God and had once been obedient to God's voice. His grave was surely a monument to disobedience and defeat. Many a marker along the way tells a story of disobedience, failure, and departure from the Lord. A

standing by the carcase: the lion had not eaten the carcase, nor torn the ass.

²⁹ And the prophet took up the carcase of the man of God, and laid it upon the ass, and brought it back: and the old prophet came to the city, to mourn and to bury him.

³⁰ And he laid his carcase in his own grave; and they mourned over him, *saying*, Alas, my brother!

³¹ And it came to pass, after he had buried him, that he spake to his sons, *saying*, When I am dead, then bury me in the sepulchre wherein the man of God *is* buried; lay my bones beside his bones:

³² For the saying which he cried by the word of the LORD against the altar in Bethel, and against all the houses of the high places which *are* in the cities of Samaria, shall surely come to pass.

³³ After this thing Jeroboam returned not from his evil way, but made again of the lowest of the people priests of the high places: whosoever would, he consecrated him, and he became *one* of the priests of the high places.

³⁴ And this thing became sin unto the house of Jeroboam, even to cut *it* off, and to destroy *it* from off the face of the earth.

2 Kings 23:15-18

¹⁵ Moreover the altar that *was* at Bethel, and the high place which Jeroboam the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin, had made, both that altar and the high place he brake down, and burned the high place, and stamped *it* small to powder, and burned the grove.

¹⁶ And as Josiah turned himself, he spied the sepulchres that *were* there in the mount, and sent, and took the bones out of the sepulchres, and burned *them* upon the altar, and polluted it, according to the word of the LORD which the man of God proclaimed, who proclaimed these words.

¹⁷ Then he said, What title *is* that that I see? And the men of the city told him, *It is* the sepulchre of the man of God, which came from Judah, and proclaimed these things that thou hast done against the altar of Bethel.

¹⁸ And he said, Let him alone; let no man move his bones. So they let his bones alone, with the bones of the prophet that came out of Samaria.

flaming sword at the east of the Garden of Eden marked the place of the first disobedience in the world (Genesis 3:24). A pillar of salt marked the spot where a woman turned from following the Lord (Genesis 19:26). A heap of stones outside the city marked the spot where Achan met premature death because of his sin (Joshua 7:26).

Homeward Bound

We are thankful that there are also monuments of success along the path, which leads from earth to Glory. God's Word is filled with accounts of men and women who turned neither to the right hand, nor to the left, nor back, and have made a successful journey "Home." Read the 11th chapter of Hebrews, which tells briefly the account of those who triumphed through faith. Read also the story of the life of each of these heroes. It will increase your faith to know of those who have endured unto the end.

If we today will purpose in our heart to keep our eyes on the True Guide and obey not only a part but the complete instructions given us, we, too, may someday be among those who fought for and kept the faith.

**"Then fight, brave, against all evil;
Never run, nor even lag behind.
If you'd win for God and right,
Keep on the Firing Line."**

QUESTIONS

1. What sign was given to show that the prophecy of the man of God was true?
2. To whom did Jeroboam look for healing of his hand?
3. What do you think was the reason Jeroboam asked the man of God to go home with him?
4. Why did he refuse to go?
5. What was the first mistake made by the man of God?
6. What did the old prophet give as a reason for taking him home with him?
7. Tell of the sad death of the man of God.
8. Why is it such a terrible thing to disobey the voice of God?